



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

INFLUENCE OF THE CLERGY, AND OF RELIGIOUS AND SECTARIAN FORCES, ON THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

THE purpose of this paper is to assemble, so that they may be viewed and comprehended at one time, all those causes, remote and immediate, of the American Revolution, which are religious, sectarian, or ecclesiastical in character. This is not to argue that the Revolution was a holy war, or even that religious prejudices and the dissenting clergy were dominant forces, but it will be shown, I think, that the historical muse has been too much of a worldling, and has worshipped too partially the golden calf of economic causes.

When one enters on the search for the fountainhead of a great movement, one risks being tempted to go back and back until one reaches absurdity in the Garden of Eden. If, however, we go no further than John Adams, a contemporary, in his quest for causes of the Revolution, we shall at least have worthy authority. Writing to Jefferson, in 1818, he said: "I think, with you, that it is difficult to say at what moment the Revolution began. In my opinion, it began as early as the first plantation of the country. Independence of Church and Parliament was a fixed principle of our predecessors in 1620, as it was of Samuel Adams and Christopher Gadsden, in 1776."¹

This, I take it, suggests that when the British government forced the Dissenters to leave England and flee to America, it simply put off for one hundred and fifty years, and removed to another land, the final struggle between those who represented the established church, feudal practice and tradition, the king's prerogative, landed property and privilege, on the one side; and their opponents on the other side, the radicals and liberals in Church and State, with antagonistic ideas as to church and secular government. Of course, the Pilgrims and Puritans of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, believers in the philosophy of Locke and the thinking of Milton, did not bring to America the conservative views of the divine right of kings, of monarchy, or of ecclesiastical tradition.² The Episcopal Church, upholding these ideas and the pretensions of the Stuarts, having driven many of the Dissenters out of England, seemed, for nearly a hundred years, content to be rid of them, but

¹ John Adams, *Works*, X. 313.

² Andrews, *Colonial Period*, p. 60.

as the colonies grew in importance, the church began to try to regain this lost opportunity for expansion. American resistance to this effort coincided with resistance to taxation. John Adams asserted that one reason for opposing taxation was that "if Parliament could tax us, they could establish the Church of England, with all its creeds, articles, tests, ceremonies, and tithes, and prohibit all other churches, as conventicles and schism shops."³

But before we take up the causes of the final bitterness that led directly to independence, we must see how, in the whole colonial period, controversies of a religious character kept the colonists suspicious of encroachment by the Anglican Church. The Puritans had been obliged, soon after their first settlement, to resist an attempt to transplant into their midst the institutions of feudalism and the seeds of privilege. The aristocratic Gorges, supporter of the Stuarts, believer in the kingly prerogative, tried to stop the Puritan growth by setting up a feudal proprietorship in their very midst. Archbishop Laud, hoping to see the Anglican Church supplant the Puritan in New England, gave his powerful aid, but, as if by miracle, the Puritans triumphed.⁴ Again, it was the Episcopalian zeal of Andros, in the last years of the seventeenth century, that much aroused the wrath of the Puritans. In spite of their laws penalizing every observance of Christmas, Andros attended Anglican service on that day, "a redcoat . . . on his right hand and Captain George on his left", and sixty redcoated soldiers in the rear. In the spring, as if again to flout the "immodest godliness" of the Puritans, he even caused a Maypole to be set up, and thereupon Increase Mather became sure that "'the Devil' had begun his march of triumph". When the governor, in his Anglican zeal, established an Episcopalian minister in Boston, Puritan intolerance could see in him only "Baal's priest", and his prayers were "leeks, garlic and trash", while his church was a no less hateful thing than "Egypt's Babylon".⁵

³ Adams, *Works*, X. 288. "And independence of Church and Parliament was always kept in view in this part of the country, and, I believe, in most others. The hierarchy and parliamentary authority ever were dreaded and detested even by a majority of professed Episcopalians." *Ibid.*, p. 313.

⁴ Andrews, *Colonial Period*, pp. 36-39; Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation* ("Original Narratives" series), pp. 315-316.

⁵ *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, seventh series, VII. 133; Channing, *History of the United States*, II. 174-175; Oliver, *Puritan Commonwealth*, pp. 446-450; *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, second series, XIII. 410-411. Edward Randolph also aroused Puritan wrath when he insisted upon tolerance for the Anglican Church in Massachusetts. Hutchinson, *Collection of Papers relative to Massachusetts Bay*, pp. 525-576 (especially 538); Oliver, *Puritan Commonwealth*, pp. 434-445; Doyle, *The English in America*, II. 268-269; Osgood, *American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century*, III. 390.

After 1700, the suspicions of the colonists were repeatedly aroused. First, when an effort was made to subject all corporate and proprietary governments to the direct control of the crown, the Anglican Church supported the plan with great zeal, as did the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and all devout Episcopalians in the colonies, who saw in this their opportunity to overthrow in New England the power of the Puritans, and in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, that of the Quakers. It was not unnoticed that in England the Tories supported and the Whigs opposed this plan.⁶

Again and again, the dissenting sects in America took alarm as they noted the influence of the Bishop of London in getting American political plums for those who gave promise of being useful allies of the Anglican Church in America.⁷ The bishop always seemed to understand that a profitable religion never wants proselytes. This same watchful shepherd of the Episcopalian flock was consulted repeatedly as to the laws affecting the interests of Anglican churchmen in America. Under his influence many laws fathered by the Dissenters were disallowed to their bitter disappointment and disgust.⁸ A law of North Carolina giving Presbyterian ministers the right to perform the marriage ceremony was disallowed in England, because the Episcopalian clergy, not above six in number, would thus be deprived of their fees.⁹ In some cases of interference of this kind even the Anglican churchmen in the colonies were offended. This was true when the Board of Trade recommended the disallowance of certain acts of the colonial legislatures providing for the disposal of Episcopalian parish property, reducing the salaries of church ministers, or providing for the punishment of ministers for immoral conduct—perhaps those described by Hammond, who “could babble in a pulpit and roar in a

⁶ Andrews, *Colonial Period*, p. 143.

⁷ Dexter, *Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, I. 54–55. No minister could be preferred to any benefice in America without certificate from the Bishop of London. No schoolmaster could go from England to the colonies without license from him. *Documents relative to the Colonial History of New York*, VII. 368–369 (Sherlock's report). William Penn's charter forced him to acknowledge the right of the Bishop of London to appoint ministers to Pennsylvania, if twenty colonists expressed that wish. Thorpe, *Constitutions and Charters*, etc., V. 3043.

⁸ Root, *Relations of Pennsylvania with Great Britain*, pp. 228, 232; *Pennsylvania Statutes at Large*, II. 450, 480, 490; *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VI. 716.

⁹ Channing, *History of the United States*, III. 6, quoting Dickerson, *Colonial Government*, ch. V.; *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VI. 715–716. Andros tried to place marriages in the hands of Anglican clergy. Hutchinson, *History of Massachusetts*, I. 318. Legal marriage in Virginia was by Anglican clergy only. McIlwaine, *Struggle . . . for Religious Toleration* (Johns Hopkins University Studies, XII., no. 4).

tavern".¹⁰ Again Parliament passed laws encroaching on the general freedom of worship in the colonies,¹¹ an interference resented more or less by all sects. Though in general the Board of Trade sought to protect the interests of the established church, yet the graven image of commerce was never forgotten amidst the zeal for the true God, and the board did not neglect to enforce such a degree of toleration as would not check colonial growth and prosperity.¹² Even this last laudable activity of the board was often hateful to bigoted colonists, and became a cause of estrangement from the mother-country.

In addition to these actual acts of interference, we must remember that all governors, lieutenant-governors, secretaries, councillors, attorneys general, chief justices, customs-officers—all colonial officers, in fact, who were appointed by the British government—were "ruffle-shirted Episcopalians", and attended the Anglican Church.¹³ This fact, especially in the northern colonies where an opposing sect was established, served to keep the British officials aloof religiously, and to make the Dissenters less willing to yield obedience to them. Moreover, these officers, thus isolated at this important point of social contact, lost that opportunity of understanding and sympathizing with the people. It was to an American public thus irritated by a nagging fear of intrusion by the Anglican Church, and out of sympathy with an Episcopalian officialdom, that there came, about the middle of the eighteenth century, a threat of the establishment of an American episcopate.

To repeat here the story of the struggle against the real or imaginary danger of the establishment of an American episcopate seems unnecessary after the prominence that has been given to that subject by Dr. Cross's exhaustive and scholarly study of *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies*. It will suffice to state briefly his cautious judgment as to the importance of the controversy. "If the question of the establishment of bishops", he says, "did not contribute a lion's share in causing that enmity to the mother country . . . it was involved in the struggle and

¹⁰ The Bishop of London was given a royal commission authorizing him to hold spiritual courts in America. *Documents relative to the Colonial History of New York*, V. 849. In South Carolina, such tribunals were employed for correcting the morals and irregularities of the clergy. Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, pp. 80-86.

¹¹ Dickerson, *American Colonial Government*, p. 231.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

¹³ For nearly one hundred years before the Revolution, royal governors were instructed to see that the Book of Common Prayer was read "each Sunday and Holy Day", and "the Blessed Sacrament administered according to the rules of the Church of England". *Documents relative to the Colonial History of New York*, VII. 362.

deserves to be regarded as an important part of it", and again, "it was at least one of the causes tending to . . . alienation".¹⁴ Looking at the matter from another angle, he says later: "The strained relations which heralded the approach of the War of Independence strengthened the opposition to episcopacy, rather than that religious differences were a prime moving cause of political alienation."¹⁵

The truth is, that one studying only this contention against the Anglican episcopate, could not have a full realization of the significance of religious and sectarian forces in bringing on the Revolution. One must also study the work of Presbyterian and Congregationalist preachers who taught the political doctrines of Locke and Milton until the members of their congregations held the liberal theories of government which rendered them most sensitive to governmental oppression. Regard must be had for the extent to which revolutionary leaders made use of, or were affected by, religious convictions and sectarian prejudices. We must study the details of the wrangling among the Anglicans and Dissenters over other matters than the episcopate. Attention must be given to the demonstrable fact that in the war itself, north of the Mason and Dixon line at least, the Episcopalians became in a great majority Loyalists, while the Dissenters became Patriots. Even in the South, where a much larger proportion of Episcopalians came out on the Patriot side, it was, in Virginia especially, the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and the German Dissenters that originally forced the conflict with England against the conservative planter Episcopalians.

Of these influences, the first and most important to study is that of the Calvinistic preachers. Some attention has been given to the activity of Jonathan Mayhew and Samuel Cooper because John Adams regarded them as prime movers, with Otis, Thacher, and Samuel Adams, for American liberty.¹⁶ But a far more subtle influence than that which attracted John Adams's attention was the preaching by a large number of Congregational and Presbyterian ministers,¹⁷ of the doctrines of political liberty which they had learned from their study of Sydney, Milton, Locke, and Hoadly,

¹⁴ M. Chamberlain, *John Adams*, pp. 23, 25, note, 27; Brooks Adams, *Emancipation of Massachusetts*, pp. 314 *et seq.*; Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, pp. 157, 214; Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, pp. 109, 110.

¹⁵ Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, p. 271.

¹⁶ Adams, *Works*, X. 284. Chastellux also suggests Cooper's influence, *Travels in North America* (trans.), II. 281-283. Rev. Samuel Cooper seems to have been an intimate friend of John Hancock, and to have influenced him greatly.

¹⁷ A. E. Dunning, *Congregationalists in America*, pp. 270, 275; *Notes and Queries*, fifth series, VI. 142; Kapp, *Life of Kalb*, p. 73. Kalb sent many of these sermons to Versailles (1764). *The Singular Happiness of Such Heads or Rulers, as are able to Choose out their People's Way: a brief Sermon Preached to the Great and General Assembly of the Province of Massachusetts Bay . . . May 28,*

apostles of free institutions, whose teachings had never before found such receptive minds as those in America.¹⁸ Most Presbyterians and Congregationalists of New England looked upon themselves as lineal descendants of the Puritans, and as such they felt bound to defend the Puritan Revolution. Bookish men, as most of the New England clergy were, found a mine of arguments, political weapons for that defense, in the writings of Locke and Milton. Upon the mellowing of occasion, preachers rarely failed to draw upon these sources, and they often stated Locke's theories more clearly than Locke himself. Many of the sermons had no hint of discontent, no incitement to rebellion, but merely an unimpassioned exposition of the political theories of the Puritan writers on government, of a century or more before. People living in an open-minded frontier community and nourished with such intellectual pabulum as this, would never be content to be governed arbitrarily by a government three thousand miles distant and not of their own making.

In these sermons, the congregations were told of Locke's doctrine that it was the people's right to choose their own rulers and to fix the bounds of their authority. They were taught that government was accountable to the people and that the New England charter had been a compact between the sovereign and the first patentees.¹⁹ Samuel Davies, the eloquent Virginia preacher to whom Patrick Henry listened from his eleventh to his twenty-second year, taught that the British constitution was "but the voluntary compact of sovereign and subject".²⁰ Henry declared, "government is a conditional compact between king and people . . . a violation of the covenant by either party discharges the other from obligation."

A Connecticut preacher, early in the seventeenth century, was teaching that: "The choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people, by God's own allowance. They who have the power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power, also, to set the bounds and limitations of the power and place unto which they call them."²¹ If there is truth in the old adage, "like priest, like people", New England was no healthy place for absolutism.

1701 (Boston, 1701); *The Duty of Civil Rulers: an Election Sermon*, by E. Dorr (Hartford, 1765); *Works of John Witherspoon* (Philadelphia, 1800), I. 319-344. Titles of many more of these sermons will appear later in this article.

¹⁸ Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, pp. xxxiii, 46; Stillé, *Life and Times of John Dickinson*, I. 29-31, 77; *Notes and Queries*, fifth series, VI. 142.

¹⁹ Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, pp. 159, 175.

²⁰ Samuel Davies, *Sermons*, III. 80. There is little doubt that Davies was Henry's model in public speaking. *Ibid.*, I. 21; H. A. White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders*, pp. 52-56, 104.

²¹ Lord Acton, *Lectures*, p. 311. Mayhew, more than one hundred years later than the Connecticut preacher, makes the same argument; see Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 61.

New England ministers, along with their "three mile prayers and half mile graces", at which their critics jeered, were preaching, too, that people were justified in rising even against the sovereign himself in order "to redress their grievances; to vindicate their natural and legal rights; to break the yoke of tyranny".²² This they reasoned from the natural freedom of man, basing their arguments upon the ideas of Milton, Sydney, and Locke.²³ From the earliest times in fact, the ministers had taught the duty to God and the fear of offending God, but had not worried their flocks about their duty to kings or with the fear of offending them.²⁴ "Honor . . . and obedience to good rulers, and a spirited opposition to bad ones", was the burden of some New England preaching, wrote John Adams.²⁵ "If", he said again, "the orators on the 4th of July really wish to investigate the principles and feelings which produced the Revolution, they ought to study . . . Dr. Mayhew's sermon on passive obedience and non-resistance."²⁶ This famous sermon of Mayhew attracted Adams's attention because of its boldness, but the thesis was an old one, and much dwelt upon later by the dissenting ministers of New England. They were driven to it in defense of their rebellious Puritan ancestors,²⁷ and out of mere

²² Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 62.

²³ Stillé, *Life and Times of Dickinson*, I. 31, 77; Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, pp. xxxiii and xxxiv. Dean Tucker calls attention to "the evil Consequences arising from the Propagation of Mr. Locke's democratical Principles". *Four Letters on Important National Subjects*, p. 89. See also Masson, *Life of Milton*, V. 647; Milton, *Defence of the People of England* and *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*; and Locke, *Essay on Government*. Milton wrote: "That no unbridled potentate or tyrant, but to his sorrow, for the future may presume such high and irrepressible license over mankind, to havoc and turn upside down whole kingdoms of men, as though they were no more in respect to his perverse will than a nation of pismires." And again, "Our liberty is not Caesar's; it is a blessing we have received from God himself . . . to lay down this at Caesar's feet, which we derive not from him . . . were an unworthy action, and a degrading of our very nature. . . . Being, therefore, peculiarly God's own . . . we are entirely free by nature, and cannot . . . be reduced into a condition of slavery to any man, especially to a wicked, unjust, cruel tyrant." Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, pp. 62, 83.

²⁴ Andrews, *Colonial Period*, p. 84.

²⁵ Adams, *Works*, II. 167-168.

²⁶ Adams, *Works*, X. 301. See *A Discourse concerning unlimited Submission and Non-resistance to the Higher Powers*, etc., by J. Mayhew (Boston, 1750, pp. 55); *Remarks on an Anonymous Tract* (1764), by J. Mayhew, a reply to an attack on the above. James Otis was much influenced by Mayhew, who seems, indeed, to have suggested to him the idea of revolutionary committees and of union. Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 44. Robert Treat Paine used to hear Mayhew at the West Church, and greatly admired him. Davol, *Two Men of Taunton*, p. 77.

²⁷ John Witherspoon's attitude is a typical one (1758). "The noble struggle which many in England made, about an hundred years ago, for their liberties sacred and civil, still bears the name of the grand rebellion". *Works of John Witherspoon*, I. 326.

oppugnance to Episcopalian teachings. The young candidates for the Anglican clergy were taught at Oxford that submission and obedience, clear, absolute, and without exception, was the badge and character of the Church of England.²⁸ The Anglican clergy were compelled to read on the anniversary of the death of Charles I. the Oxford homily "against disobedience and wilful rebellion", or to preach a sermon against that sin.²⁹ Mayhew indulged in only modest hyperbole when he charged the Anglican clergy with teaching that if kings oppress, and prayers and entreaties fail, we must all "suffer ourselves to be robbed and butchered at the pleasure of the 'Lord's anointed', lest we should incur the sin of rebellion and the punishment of damnation".³⁰

The scorn of the Puritan for such doctrines is also well shown in John Adams's article in the *Boston Gazette* (1765) wherein he asserts: "The adventurers [New England Puritans] . . . had an utter contempt of all that dark ribaldry of hereditary, indefeasible right,—the Lord's anointed,—and the divine, miraculous, original of government, with which priesthood had enveloped the feudal monarch in clouds and mysteries, and from whence they had deduced the most mischievous of all doctrines, that of passive obedience, and non-resistance".³¹ Adams did not like it when Mr. Gay on the day of Thanksgiving said, "the ancient weapons of the church were prayers and tears, not clubs". This, he thought, inculcated submission to authority in pretty strong terms.³²

In refutation of the submission doctrine, Mayhew preached the right of people to free themselves from inglorious servitude and ruin. "It is upon this principle that many royal oppressors have been driven . . . into banishment, and many slain by the hands of their subjects . . . that Tarquin was expelled from Rome, and Julius Caesar . . . cut off in the senate-house . . . that King Charles

²⁸ Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 41; Adams, *Works*, X. 187.

²⁹ Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 42. Now and then one was hardy enough to omit it. See Dexter, *Literary Diary of Stiles*, I. 339-340. A favorite text among the Anglican clergy was Romans xiii. 1-8: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." See Mayhew's reasoning on this, Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 53. There were, to be sure, low churchmen like Benjamin Hoadly, who had the same view as Mayhew on this subject.

³⁰ Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 63. One must remember in reading Mayhew's sermons that he and his views were discussed far and wide in Massachusetts. See Adams, *Works*, II. 4.

³¹ Adams, *Works*, III. 454. See also Samuel Adams on this subject; Wells, *Life of Samuel Adams*, I. 245.

³² Adams, *Works*, II. 167-168.

I. was beheaded before his own banqueting-house . . . that King James II. was made to fly that country which he aimed at enslaving."³³ When Patrick Henry, a few years later, expressed such ideas in the Virginia House of Burgesses, he was greeted with shouts of "Treason! treason!". Mayhew banned the submission doctrine with bell, book, and candle, declaring: "The hereditary, indefeasible, divine right of kings, and the doctrine of non-resistance, which is built upon the supposition of such a right, are altogether as fabulous . . . as transubstantiation, or any of the most absurd reveries of ancient or modern visionaries".³⁴ "How does this prove", asked Mayhew, "that those who resist a lawless, unreasonable power, which is contrary to the will of God, do therein resist the will and ordinance of God?"³⁵ Mayhew also ridiculed Charles I., in the rôle of "blessed saint" and "royal martyr". Rather was he a "man black with guilt" and "laden with iniquity", a "burlesque" upon saintship and martyrdom. A tyrant, such as he, was "a messenger of Satan to buffet us".³⁶ Such doctrines so clearly hark back to the days of Cromwell that we can understand why that charitable and Christian gentleman, Rev. Arthur Browne, stepping forth in the beauty of holiness, accused Mayhew of licking up the "spittle" of his Puritan predecessors and coughing "it out again, with some additions of his own filth and phlegm".³⁷

To this point, we have had to do with political doctrines taught to New England congregations before the day of any of those measures of the British government which are commonly regarded as the causes of the American Revolution. As these measures—the Stamp Act, the Townshend Acts, the Tea Act, and others—came forth to plague the Americans, the Puritan pulpits "thundered", to use John Adams's expression,³⁸ and more and more emphasis was given to the idea of the right of resistance.³⁹ On August 25, 1765, Mayhew preached from the text: "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." When, soon after, a mob destroyed Hutchin-

³³ Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, pp. 62-63. He might have taken his text from Milton, "It is not, neither ought to be, the glory of a Protestant state never to have put their king to death; it is the glory of a Protestant king never to have deserved death." Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, quoted in Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 62, note.

³⁴ Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 84. See also p. 86, note *a*, and pp. 70, 73, 75, 78, 82. See Witherspoon on the same subject, *Works*, I. 326.

³⁵ Twenty-five years later, John Adams was proclaiming the same doctrine. Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 75 and note.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74, note, 99. Stiles has a like attitude in his *Literary Diary*. I. 34-35.

³⁷ Cross, *Anglican Episcopate*, p. 150.

³⁸ Adams, *Works*, II. 154.

³⁹ Stillé, *Life and Times of Dickinson*, I. 77.

son's house, a ringleader, who was seized, is said to have excused his actions on the ground that he was excited by the sermon, "and that he thought he was doing God service".⁴⁰ Charles Chauncey, one of the most eminent divines in America, preached against the act with power and learning, and on its repeal, preached a memorable sermon, filled with liberal political doctrines, from the text: "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country".⁴¹ Samuel Stillman, a Baptist, also denounced the Stamp Act from his pulpit in Boston,⁴² while John Zubly, a German Lutheran minister in Georgia, taking for his text the words—later used with the same significance by Lincoln—"A house divided against itself cannot stand", boldly denied the British right to tax.⁴³

The Boston Massacre was piously magnified by New England divines, Rev. John Lothrop preaching upon the "Innocent Blood Crying to God from the Streets of Boston".⁴⁴ Rev. Samuel Cooke's sermon on this occasion was filled with the doctrines of Locke, and the Massachusetts house of representatives resolved that it be printed in the public press.⁴⁵ On the anniversary of the Massacre in 1772, Dr. Chauncey preached a sermon in the Old South Church, and then Joseph Warren stepped into the pulpit, which was hung with black cloth, and delivered an oration on the danger of standing armies. In a sermon preached before the governor and council, Mr. Tucker discussed the origin and design of government, and the sacredness of compacts. "The people", he declared, "as well as their rulers are the proper judges of the civil constitution they are under. . . . Unlimited submission is not due to government in a

⁴⁰ Hutchinson, *History of Massachusetts*, III. 123.

⁴¹ *A Discourse on "the Good News from a Far Country"* (on the repeal of the Stamp Act), by Charles Chauncey (Boston, 1766); also in Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, pp. 114, 119, 133.

⁴² T. Armitage, *History of the Baptists*, p. 781. Other sermons on this occasion were: (a) *Divine Providence Illustrated and Improved*, a Thanksgiving discourse preached in the Presbyterian or Congregational Church in Providence by David S. Rowland (1766); (b) *Some Important Observations, Occasioned by, and Adapted to the Public Fast, Ordered by Authority, December 18th, 1765*, by Stephen Johnson (Newport, 1766).

⁴³ *An Humble Inquiry into the Nature of the Dependency of the American Colonies upon the Parliament of Great Britain and the Right of Parliament to Lay Taxes on the Said Colonies*, by John J. Zubly (Savannah, 1769).

⁴⁴ Hearing that Governor Hutchinson would pardon the soldiers, Dr. Chauncey, in his pulpit, cried: "Surely he would not counteract the operation of the law both of God and of man . . . surely he would not make himself a partaker in the guilt of murder, by putting a stop to the shedding of their blood who have murderously spilt the blood of others." Hutchinson, *History of Massachusetts*, III. 329, note.

⁴⁵ Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, pp. 147, 155. The text was: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." It was listened to by the lieutenant-governor, council, and house of representatives.

free state.”⁴⁶ Upon every event in that series that led to a war for independence, the influence of New England’s dissenting clergy may clearly be seen.⁴⁷

But notwithstanding all of these sermons, and the liberal political doctrines which they imparted, one may ask whether any heed was given to them. In the days of New England’s foundation, political leadership as well as moral guidance was beyond question with the clergy, and only the commandments of God took precedence over their teachings. Many of the political doctrines noted above were inculcated in those days, and even in the eighteenth century, when the influence of the “elders” had declined, their council and advice was eagerly sought.⁴⁸ No Englishman knew more of American conditions than Governor Pownall, and in a speech in Parliament in 1769, he refers to the leadership of the New England clergy, and the probable unifying effect they would have. “The spirit of their religion will”, he cried, “like Moses’ serpent, devour every other passion and affection”.⁴⁹ The statement of Samuel Adams that the people of New England were not “priest-ridden”, and that of John Adams that “the clergy have little influence . . . beyond that which their own piety, virtues, and talents naturally give them”,⁵⁰ does not militate against this view, for the “brace of Adamses” wrote these opinions, having in mind a comparison with Catholic countries. In the same breath, John Adams testified that the clergy were “jealous friends of liberty”. His letters show him to have constantly sought their advice on public affairs, finding them “zealous in the cause”, and agreeing with him that the British measures would “ruin the liberties of the country”.⁵¹

It must be remembered too that the pulpit was in that day the most direct and effectual way of reaching the masses—far out-rivalling the newspaper, then only in its infancy. In New England, moreover, a sermon was always preached as a part of the imposing ceremony of the election. This was not a mere compli-

⁴⁶ *Diary of Stiles*, I. 218; Headley, *Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution*, p. 26.

⁴⁷ *Diary of Stiles*, I. 103, 184.

⁴⁸ Sabine, *Loyalists*, p. 51; Stillé, *Life and Times of Dickinson*, I. 29-31; Eddis, *Letters*, pp. 46-49; Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. xxxvi; *Familiar Letters of John Adams*, pp. 5, 6. In this connection it is interesting to note that in Evans’s *Bibliography of Books printed in the United States* we find that over two-thirds of the books and pamphlets printed in the colonies in the first half of the eighteenth century were on religious subjects. From 1750 to 1775 about one-half are on these subjects. The writings of the clergy, therefore, would seem to have been in demand.

⁴⁹ *American Archives*, fifth series, II. 390.

⁵⁰ Samuel Adams, *Writings*, II. 195-196; Adams, *Works*, V. 495.

⁵¹ Adams, *Works*, II. 11, 329, 424.

ment to religion, for after 1750, certainly, the sermons were listened to as a source of political instruction. By legislative resolution they were published in pamphlet form, and were scattered through the colony, becoming in some cases a sort of text of civil rights. They boldly attacked the question of the nature of compacts and charters as they affected the relations of the colonies to England. They discussed the origin, nature, and end of government, and the rights of man, and asserted that all laws were designed for the good of the governed.⁵²

That the revolutionary leaders courted the support of the clergy is shown by many facts, one of which was the banquet given (1770) by the "Merchants and other Sons of Liberty" to the ministers in Faneuil Hall.⁵³ A little earlier, a Tory, describing the Revolutionary Whig gatherings, said: "Garrets were crowded with patriots; mechanics and lawyers, porters and clergymen, huddled promiscuously into them."⁵⁴

During the last years of agitation, 1773 to 1775, the activity of the Puritan ministry became more and more marked. Rev. Charles Turner in his election sermon, 1773, denied that ministers should not meddle in politics. "It is their duty to interfere", he cried, "where the liberties of the land are assailed. . . . Religious liberty is so blended with civil, that if one falls it is not to be expected that the other will continue." The first provincial congress of Massachusetts acknowledged "with profound gratitude the public obligation to the ministry, as friends of civil and religious liberty", asking their aid to enforce the resolutions of the Continental Congress.⁵⁵ The justices of the court of general sessions, addressing General Gage, regretted that "some whose business it is to preach the gospel of Christ" were trying to "destroy the harmony of society", and General Gage, replying, was piously shocked that ministers "shamefully pervert the duties of their sacred functions".⁵⁶ In a proclamation, Gage declared that "the name of God has been introduced in the pulpits to excite and justify devastation and massacre", and he refused the assembly, when they asked him to appoint a fast day, for, he said, "the request was only to give an opportunity for sedition to flow from the pulpit".⁵⁷ Nor was this confined to New

⁵² Preachers like Mayhew and Cooper seem to have known as much of the science of government as Otis and the Adamses. Headley, *Chaplains of the Revolution*, pp. 22, 25-40.

⁵³ *Diary of Stiles*, I. 54-55.

⁵⁴ Frothingham, *Life and Times of Joseph Warren*, pp. 50, 51.

⁵⁵ Headley, *Chaplains of the Revolution*, p. 27; Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. xxxi.

⁵⁶ *Rivington's Gazetteer*, July 21, 1774.

⁵⁷ *The Remembrancer*, I. 127 (1775); Headley, *Chaplains of the Revolution*, p. 59.

England, for Governor Martin in North Carolina declared in his proclamation (August, 1775) that "the tools of sedition" were "extravagantly profaning even the most sacred name of the Almighty" to excite rebellion.⁵⁸ Governor Hutchinson asserted that men were incited to rebellion by "some of the clergy who make the highest pretence to devotion".⁵⁹ Reverend Samuel Peters in Connecticut bemoaned that "spiritual iniquity rides in high places, with halberts, pistols, and swords . . . preachers and magistrates left the pulpit, etc., for the gun and drum . . . cursing the king and Lord North . . . and the Church of England".⁶⁰

In fact, both Whig and Tory preachers often made a recruiting house of the sanctuary.⁶¹ Perhaps the most famous and picturesque example of this was Mühlenberg, "Peter the Devil", as he was dubbed, who was pastor of a German church in the Shenandoah Valley. In January, 1776, he preached from Ecclesiastes, "A time of war, and a time of peace". As his sermon ended, he declared: "There is a time to fight, and the time is here." Removing his clerical gown, he appeared in a colonel's uniform; whereupon, three hundred men of his congregation enlisted under him.⁶²

After Concord and Lexington, the dissenting clergy in every section of the country took up the work of arousing the people. In Philadelphia, the fugitive Loyalist, Curwen, heard in the Arch Street Meeting-House a truly American patriotic sermon, "pathetically lamenting the evils we are suffering from wicked and tyrannical ministers; exhorting us manfully to oppose them".⁶³ Silas Deane also listened, in a Philadelphia church, to a warm "Son of Liberty", as he ardently wrote his wife, Elizabeth.⁶⁴ John Adams, on his arrival in the City of Brotherly Love, thought the clergy there "but now beginning to engage in politics", but "they engage with a fervor that will produce wonderful effects". Those "of every

⁵⁸ *American Archives*, fourth series, III. 65.

⁵⁹ Frothingham, *Life and Times of Joseph Warren*, p. 204.

⁶⁰ Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 195.

⁶¹ Sabine, *Loyalists*, p. 51. *Diary of Stiles*, I. 484; some entries are: (November 17, 1774) "East Guilford 83 armed with Mr. Todd their pastor. . . . Haddam—100 armed—animated by Rev. Mr. May. . . . Chatham—100, marched with Rev. Mr. Boardman Pastor." *The Remembrancer*, I. 76 (1775); Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. xxxvi; Headley, *Chaplains of the Revolution*, p. 118; Frothingham, *Life and Times of Joseph Warren*, p. 404; *American Archives*, fifth series, I. 195.

⁶² H. A. Muhlenberg, *Life of Peter Muhlenberg*, pp. 52-53; Bittinger, *American Lutheran Biographies*, p. 541. Other Lutheran preachers were almost as fervid in their patriotism, for example, Streit, Martin, Nussman, Butler, and Rabenhorst. See Bittinger, *German Religious Life*, p. 129.

⁶³ S. Curwen, *Journal*, p. 27 (May 7, 1775).

⁶⁴ *New York Historical Society Collections* (1886), *The Deane Papers*, I. 17.

denomination" . . . "thunder and lighten every Sabbath".⁶⁵ To North Carolina, we are told, the Presbyterian ministers came down from Pennsylvania to convert the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of the back country to the Patriot cause.⁶⁶ But this was hardly necessary, for the Scotch-Irish Presbyterian preachers, like Charles Cummings and William Graham, were great admirers of Locke, whose doctrines they preached, and they led their people into the revolutionary movement, either fighting or preaching with them during the war.⁶⁷ In South Carolina, John Harris, Presbyterian minister at Ninety-Six, boldly stamped his republican ideas on his congregation, boasting that every man in it was a Whig. Tradition has it that he preached with a gun in his pulpit and a powder horn suspended about his neck.⁶⁸ Dr. Zubly in Georgia was so zealous in the cause that he was sent to the Continental Congress by his Whig constituency.⁶⁹ These are but typical instances of the activity of the clergy, and might be multiplied many times from the extant records.

Many of the sermons and pious exhortations of this critical period have come down to us.⁷⁰ They preached, though more boldly in this period than earlier, the liberal thinking of the Puritan philosophers, and against the doctrine of non-resistance. The people have the right, contended one, from "the sacred and inalienable Charter of the Almighty to . . . alter the Government under which they live" if this is for the general good. "The

⁶⁵ *Familiar Letters of John Adams*, pp. 65, 76, 90.

⁶⁶ *North Carolina Colonial Records*, X. 173; Jones, *Defence . . . of North Carolina*, p. 230. In Maryland, too, some were active. *American Archives*, fourth series, III. 10; McCrady, *History of South Carolina*, II. 456. In 1775 the vestries of the German Lutheran and Reformed churches of Philadelphia sent a pamphlet of forty pages to the Germans of New York and North Carolina urging them to support the cause of Congress. Mann, *Life of H. M. Muhlenberg*, p. 485.

⁶⁷ H. B. Grigsby, in *Washington and Lee Historical Papers*, no. 2, pp. 19, 39.

⁶⁸ McCrady, *History of South Carolina*, II. 454.

⁶⁹ Adams, *Works*, II. 421-422; *Diary of Stiles*, I. 545-546. Later Zubly seemed to go over to the Loyalist side.

⁷⁰ See especially W. D. Love, *Fast and Thanksgiving Days*, pp. 545 *et seq.*; Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*. In addition to these, the following are some of the best known: *The Law of Liberty: a Sermon on American Affairs*, preached at the opening of the Provincial Congress of Georgia, 1775, by John J. Zubly; *An Oration Delivered March 15, 1775, at the request of . . . Inhabitants of Boston*, by Dr. Thomas Bolton (Boston); *A Sermon Preached before the Honorable Congress of the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay, in New England*, by Samuel Langdon (Watertown, 1775); *The Snare Broken! a Thanksgiving Sermon on Occasion of the repeal of the Stamp Act*, by J. Mayhew (Boston, 1766); *A Sermon Preached before the Honorable Council and the Honorable House of Representatives of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay in New England, May 29, 1776*, by Samuel West (Boston); *An Oration in Memory of General Montgomery*, by William Smith (Philadelphia, 1776); *A Discourse Preached December 15, 1774; Thanksgiving Sermon*, by William Gordon (Boston, 1775).

Supreme Being", averred another, "hath left it in our power to choose what Government we please for our civil and religious happiness". The nature and design of government was discussed, and it was affirmed that "there are no laws, where there are no representatives of the people for whom they are . . . made".⁷¹

"Will we", asks the Rev. William Gordon, "conform to the once exploded but again courtly doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, rather than hazard life and property?" This doctrine of unlimited passive obedience is "contrary to natural law", declared Samuel West.⁷² "Self-preservation . . . the first law of nature cannot be contradicted by any social or national obligation", cried another sacerdotal dogmatist. "The man who refuses to assert his right to liberty, property, and life, is guilty of . . . high treason against God."⁷³ The Bible was raked with a fine Calvinistic comb for every quotation seeming to give divine sanction for resistance to Great Britain.⁷⁴ John Adams was pleased when the preacher, Mr. Duffield, "ran a parallel between the case of Israel and that of America; and between the conduct of Pharaoh and that of George".⁷⁵ When Rev. Samuel Langdon preached a sermon full of democratic ideas from the text, "As a roaring lion and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people", the provincial congress of Massachusetts voted that a copy of the sermon be sent "to each minister in the colony and to each member of the Congress".

Common themes in the sermons of '75 and '76 were the necessity of obedience to the measures of the Continental Congress lest disunion should result,⁷⁶ and the wickedness of Britain, "that with merciless and unhallowed hands wouldst cut down and destroy this branch of thine own vine".⁷⁷ Chastellux, travelling in America, admired the address with which a young minister speaking "reasonably enough for a preacher", introduced politics into his sermon, comparing "Christians redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, but still compelled to fight against the flesh and sin, to the Thirteen United States" fighting with England to preserve liberty and independence.⁷⁸ There was truth enough in the Loyalists' reports of sermons aiming to "animate and inflame the minds of the Rebels,

⁷¹ *American Archives*, fourth series, II. 230; Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 303.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 203, 272.

⁷³ *American Archives*, fourth series, I. 335.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, II. 149-151.

⁷⁵ *Familiar Letters of John Adams*, p. 173.

⁷⁶ Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, pp. 231, 232.

⁷⁷ Tyler, *Literary History of the American Revolution*, II. 287.

⁷⁸ Chastellux, *Travels in North America*, II. 228.

and depreciate the Britons".⁷⁹ From the Loyalist point of view, such preachers were all that William Gordon's opponent, speaking "most invectively", called him; "fire-brand of sedition . . . war-faring priest . . . Christian sower of sedition . . . church-militant general", preaching "carnage and blood".⁸⁰

Not only were the dissenting clergy making every effort to fan the flames of rebellion, but some of the more astute Whig leaders were using religious and sectarian forces in a more or less conscious way to the same end. No one can study closely the work of Samuel Adams, "the Man of the Revolution", without realizing how far he himself was actuated by religious prejudices, and the extent to which he worked upon the religious passions of others. A stern Calvinist, observant of religious ceremonies, he had all the Puritan hatred of Anglican episcopacy and Roman papacy. His natural affiliations were with the Puritan clergy, and he used them to the utmost for political purposes. It was worthy of St. Ignatius, as Brooks Adams says, "the way Samuel Adams used the toleration, granted the Canadian Catholics by the Quebec Bill, as a goad wherewith to inflame the dying Puritan fanaticism". Holy water and papal bulls were special objects of Puritan hatred, and Adams made his fellow-citizens fear that they were in danger of both.

After the "Great Awakening" (1740), religious fervor had fallen into a decline, and there were many even in New England who had ceased to attend divine service. By the time of the Revolution, there were sad apostates who did not believe that infants unbaptized would be eternally damned, and that "beauty and pleasure, comfort and joy were offensive in the sight of God",⁸¹ yet Samuel Adams, and others taking their cue from him, so aroused the latent Puritan bigotry that pre-revolutionary literature is filled with denunciations of the wise act of the British government, recognizing the Roman Catholic religion in the province of Quebec.⁸² Even in an address to the Mohawk Indians, Adams appealed to the religious passions. "Brothers,—They have made a law to establish the religion of the Pope in Canada, which lies so near you. We much fear some of your children may be induced, instead of worshipping the only true God, to pay his dues to images made with

⁷⁹ *American Archives*, fifth series, II. 564; fourth series, V. 1275.

⁸⁰ Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 196.

⁸¹ Andrews, *Colonial Period*, p. 85.

⁸² *American Archives*, fourth series, I. 180, 184, 189, 194, 202-203, 204, 205, 206, 212, 215-216, 218, 498-499, 513, 708-709, 777, 801, 816, 853-854, 912, 920-921, 959, 1104, 1146-1147, 1310, 1313, 1315, 1824-1825, 1828, 1831, 1836-1837, 1845, 1846, 1847.

their own hands.”⁸³ Again and again the Americans were asked whether they would “submit to Popery and Slavery”.

How real this danger seemed to them, we can comprehend only when we recall their traditional fear and hatred of the Roman Church and of the Catholic French in Canada. In 1745, the Puritan expedition against Louisburg was a crusade. On their flag was the motto, “*Nil desperandum, Christo duce*”. One of the chaplains is said to have carried a hatchet to destroy images in Catholic churches, and one old deacon wrote: “Oh that I could be with you and dear parson Moody in that church, to destroy the images there set up.”⁸⁴ It was a regular colonial custom at the time of the Revolution that the pope and the Devil were religiously burned on Guy Fawkes Day. Calvinists were ready to believe any yarn concerning Catholic deceit and cunning. William Livingston (1755) stoutly affirmed that the French persuaded the Indians that the Virgin Mary was born in Paris, and that our Saviour was crucified at London by the English.⁸⁵ To Jeremy Belknap, the Church of Rome was “the mother of harlots and abominations”. Samuel Adams, in 1768, “verily believed”, that “much more is to be dreaded from the growth of Popery in America, than from Stamp-Acts or *any other* Acts destructive of mens *civil* rights”.⁸⁶ He thought one should be very cautious in talking about popery before youth, lest unwittingly one should speak “the language of the Beast”.⁸⁷ John Adams, too, was alarmed (1771) that “the barriers against popery, erected by our ancestors, are suffered to be destroyed, to the hazard even of the Protestant religion”.⁸⁸ He was much pleased that “the rascally Roman Catholics” of Braintree did not dare show themselves. Jonathan Mayhew and Ezra Stiles, powerful ecclesiastical figures in New England, were both violently prejudiced against the “Romish church”.⁸⁹

When we find bigotry like this in the minds of American leaders, we are not surprised that a favorite device on the banners carried by

⁸³ *Writings of Samuel Adams*, III. 213.

⁸⁴ U. Parsons, *Life of Pepperrell* (third ed.), p. 52. See Cotton Mather's *Diary*, *Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.*, seventh series, VII. 572; VIII. 30; Burrage, *Maine at Louisburg*, pp. 17, 25, 45; Belknap, *History of New Hampshire*, p. 272; *Atlantic Monthly*, LXVII. 318, 514 (1891).

⁸⁵ Sedgwick, *William Livingston*, pp. 97-98. He spoke of the “superstitious rites and fantastic trumperies of popery”. See also Adams, *Works*, II. 5.

⁸⁶ Samuel Adams, *Writings*, I. 201, 203. See also Davies, *Sermons*, I. 21; III. 120, 146.

⁸⁷ Samuel Adams, *Writings*, I. 209, 210.

⁸⁸ Adams, *Works*, II. 252. His antipathy toward Catholics appears repeatedly. *Ibid.*, II. 5; III. 254, 268; X. 188.

⁸⁹ Tyler, *Literary History of the American Revolution*, I. 133-134; *Diary of Stiles*, I. 455, 490.

Puritan mobs, after the Quebec Act, was the demand "no Popery",⁹⁰ and that one of the motives animating the captors of Ticonderoga, was to secure the colonies from the incursions of the Roman Catholics, "those children of darkness".⁹¹ Ezra Stiles was astonished that the king and Lords and Commons, a whole Protestant Parliament—even the bishops concurring—should establish the Romish Church and "Idolatry" over three-quarters of their empire;⁹² and he preached on "the Nature and Danger of Popery in this Land". It was, thought one of Silas Deane's friends, the finishing stroke for the British ministry.⁹³ Judge Drayton, in South Carolina, having in mind the ministry's effort to establish the Roman Catholic religion, pictured "the flames which are lighted, blown up, and fed with blood by the Roman Catholic doctrines; doctrines . . . which tend to establish a most cruel tyranny in Church and State—a tyranny under which all Europe groaned for many ages".⁹⁴ A citizen of the county of Hampshire addressing the inhabitants of Massachusetts, expressed his forebodings that, "As a single amour induced one King to change the National Religion from the Roman Catholick to the Protestant, so a passion not more justifiable, though perhaps less personal, may influence some future Monarch to barter away the Protestant for the religion of the Canadians".⁹⁵

Public assemblies as well as individuals made their solemn protest. The New York assembly expostulated with the British government, and the famous Suffolk resolves deprecated the act as "dangerous in extreme degree to the Protestant religion".⁹⁶ The Continental Congress approved of these resolves, and took the same ground, as to the Catholic menace, in their addresses to the people of Great Britain and to the colonies.⁹⁷ It does not matter that Congress, a few months later, when it saw the advantage of allying Canada with the American Union, "perceived the fate of the Catholic and Protestant to be strongly linked together",⁹⁸ for the earlier sentiments were the real, and the later the feigned ones.

⁹⁰ *American Archives*, fourth series, II. 48.

⁹¹ *The Remembrancer*, I. 119 (1775); *American Archives*, fourth series, III. 637.

⁹² *Diary of Stiles*, I. 455, 490. This act was connected with the controversy over the American episcopate. Parliament might exercise the same power to set up bishops in America. Adams, *Works*, X. 188.

⁹³ *New York Hist. Soc. Coll.* (1886), *The Deane Papers*, I. 4.

⁹⁴ *American Archives*, fourth series, I. 959; fifth series, II. 1048.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, II. 98 (March, 1775).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 777, 902, 1315. Cumberland County, Massachusetts, took the same ground. *Ibid.*, p. 801.

⁹⁷ John Jay, *Correspondence*, I. 27; *American Archives*, fourth series, I. 912, 920, 927.

⁹⁸ *American Archives*, fourth series, I. 930; V. 411, 412.

Even while the commissioners of Congress were soliciting the friendship of the people of Canada, Washington was obliged to issue an order to the Continental troops against the "ridiculous and childish custom of burning the effigy of the Pope".⁹⁹ The general liberalizing influences of the Revolutionary period, the French alliance, and the fact that many American Catholics embraced the Patriot cause, brought about a much more tolerant attitude in America toward the Roman faith, but we have dealt here with the effects of the prevailing intolerance at the beginning of the war.

The Whig leaders not only made use of such religious fanaticism as they found suited to their purposes, but they were obliged to combat certain religious prejudices which were restraining men from open rebellion. All Episcopalians were by the rubrical formula concerning the "Most Gracious Sovereign Lord King George, and the Royal Family", duly and piously impressed with the divine right of the king and the sanctity of his royal prerogative.¹⁰⁰ Many of other denominations, who had faith as a grain of mustard seed, were made slow to wrath against King George because they were worried over certain Scriptural passages which were dinned in their ears by the loyal defenders of the crown. "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people", was a solemn warning to many, as was "Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought". They remembered, too, that "the king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion", and they wished rather his favor which "is as dew upon the grass". The "divine right" theory of government was simple and easier to understand than some more democratic doctrines. "I am bound by God's law to honor the King" was the quiet faith of many Loyalists.¹⁰¹

We have already seen how the Puritan preachers uttered their holy breathings against the doctrine of submission and non-resistance, but in those early arguments the quibble was made that an oppressive ruler was a tyrant, and not a king. They had not met squarely the question of kingship as a form of government. When all the logic of events (1775-1776) betrayed a drift toward independence, and actual denial of the king himself, many halted and drew back. The "divine right" reasoning had to be met. Jefferson in his *Summary View* (1774) had called the king's attention to the fact that he was "no more than the chief officer of the people, appointed by the laws . . . to assist in working the great machine

⁹⁹ Sparks, *Washington*, III. 144.

¹⁰⁰ AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW, IV. 277.

¹⁰¹ *American Archives*, fifth series, II. 985; Tyler, *Literary History of the American Revolution*, I. 323-324; Merriam, *American Political Theories*, p. 66; *American Archives*, fourth series, II. 132; V. 839, 850.

of government, erected for their use". There was no "divine right" admitted there. Samuel Langdon attacked it openly in his famous election sermon (1775). "Let them", said he, "who cry up the divine right of kings consider that the only form of government which had a proper claim to a divine establishment was so far from including the idea of a king, that it was a high crime for Israel to ask to be in this respect like other nations."¹⁰² But it was Thomas Paine—one at least in the odor of sanctity, for he had preached without taking orders—who made the most effective attack upon the divine-right dogma. "Government by kings was first introduced into the world by the Heathen", he wrote, "which the will of the Almighty . . . expressly disapproves." As to their hereditary descent, how absurd! We do not attempt to establish an hereditary wise man, or an hereditary mathematician, or an hereditary poet. A good king is a miracle, he declared, and the history of kings is only the history of the folly and depravity of human nature. Monarchy, he wrote, subtly appealing to the American aversion to Catholicism, is the popery of government.¹⁰³ George III. was a frantic potentate in breeches, a brutish tyrant. In general, kings were chosen because of a ruffianly pre-eminence. "Sceptred savage", "royal brute", "breathing automaton", were the rhetorical missiles with which Paine broke in pieces the idol of the king-worshippers.¹⁰⁴ After Paine's sophisms, and "keen attempts upon the passions", as John Adams found them, there was little recurrence to the "divine right" argument except by out-and-out Loyalists.¹⁰⁵

We have thus far barely spoken of the opposition to all this pious sedition. The Episcopalian ministry did not meanwhile sit with bridled tongue, mute and unprotesting. But in the North they preached to a small minority of people, while in the South, especially in Virginia, they were in bad repute, and had, moreover, little influence over their congregations, made up of a planter aristocracy¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Jefferson, *Writings* (Ford ed.), I. 429; Thornton, *Pulpit of the Revolution*, p. 239. For contemporary attacks, see *American Archives*, fourth series, II. 58; III. 1106. Here again the latter-day Puritans had only to develop the ideas of their ancestors of 150 years earlier. Milton mourned that Englishmen should "fall back or rather creep back . . . to their once abjured and detested thralldom of kingship". He asked, "Where is this goodly Tower of a Commonwealth, which the English boasted they would build to overshadow Kings?" Masson, *Life of Milton*, V. 647.

¹⁰³ *American Archives*, fourth series, IV. 1544-1548.

¹⁰⁴ Paine, *Common Sense*. See "Cato" on this subject, *American Archives*, fourth series, V. 545, 546.

¹⁰⁵ *American Archives*, fifth series, II. 939.

¹⁰⁶ I hope in a future study of the great sectarian conflict going on before and during the war, to take up this whole problem in a more satisfactory manner.

which took its religion not over seriously. Besides, the Scotch-Irish Presbyterian preachers of the southern uplands were spreading in that region the same anti-monarchical doctrines as those we have noted, for the most part, in New England.¹⁰⁷ There were dissenting clergy, it must be admitted, who did not join with their brethren in teaching liberal political doctrines, or, later, in urging their flocks to open resistance to England, but they were in a small minority and had little effect in staying the tide of rebellion.

In view of all the facts that have here been presented, I believe that we must hereafter give more weight to the religious factor among the causes of the American Revolution. After twelve years' study of the period, I am not convinced that the economic causes of which so much has been made are adequate alone to explain the bitterness of the controversy. In fact, the whole colonial period must be studied, and many conditions noted, which there is no time to mention here, before one may at all comprehend why the American people rebelled in 1775. Among the many causes, I rate religious bigotry, sectarian antipathy, and the influence of the Calvinistic clergy, which we have reviewed, as among the most important. One may argue that after all the clergy were merely a part of the American people, affected by the same conditions, and driven in their political actions by the same motives as the members of their congregations, and that, therefore, their teachings merely reflect the general views of the times, and are not to be taken as causes, but I am convinced that they have deeper significance than that. Conflicting political ideas, and not tea or taxes, caused the American secession from the British empire, and the Puritan clergy had a large part in planting the predominant American political ideas which were antagonistic to those dominant in England. As has been said, the Americans were not only Protestants, but protestants from Protestantism itself, and from this fact, as Burke expressed it, a fierce spirit of liberty had grown up. This spirit the dissenting clergy communicated to a people far more influenced by what they heard in the House of God than we in these degenerate days can comprehend.

C. H. VAN TYNE.

¹⁰⁷ See Grigsby's article in *Washington and Lee Historical Papers*, no. 2, pp. 6 *et seq.*